

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

INTERAGENCY ADRIFT

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ABSTRACT

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Critics continue to advocate solutions to the interagency processes and outcomes (IA) they deem ineffective. Examples of IA shortcomings include reconstruction and stability operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and the failed government response and recovery support for Hurricane Katrina. The paper asserts that it is the parent organization or system of the IA, the national security establishment (NSE) that is ineffective. Through a systems approach, the paper identifies the operating environments of the NSE in order to understand the current challenges it faces. The paper discusses current NSE practices and identifies the root causes of its ineffectiveness. Those are intra- and extra-organizational behaviors and existing IA structures and processes. Finally, the paper analyzes several proposed solutions to identify those that more effectively address the root problem - IA unity of effort.

INTERAGENCY ADRIFT

People largely accept the terrorist attack against the U.S. in September 2001 as a watershed event that caused a significant shift in U.S. national security policy. President Bush's National Security Strategy (NSS) from 2002 and U.S. participation in the Global War on Terror (GWOT) in pursuit of national security interests substantiate this claim. These events and the significant amount of national treasure expended in pursuit of U.S. interests at home and abroad result in criticism. Many criticize U.S. national goals; others criticize the manner through which the current U.S. government attempts to achieve them. Both increasingly cite interagency (IA) ineffectiveness as the root cause of flawed policy development and ineffective policy execution. Their numerous books, essays, and studies identify and advocate various solutions to achieving IA effectiveness.¹ Unfortunately, these same critics fail to recognize that the IA process is merely a subset and, at times, output of a greater system of systems widely acknowledged as the national security establishment (NSE).² The critics' failure to analyze the causes of IA ineffectiveness through a systems approach is not insignificant; it results in misidentification of the causes of the problem and results in flawed solutions.

In today's complex, globally integrated world, an ineffective national security establishment manifests itself in an IA that lacks unity of effort. Since the IA process is the foundation of U.S. national security policy development and execution, the U.S. government must take significant strides to achieve a more responsive, optimized IA process. This paper provides an analysis of the environments that necessitate changes in our national security establishment, reviews the current body and practice of the NSE and IA processes, identifies opportunities for change and risk mitigation, and recommends a solution for optimizing the current national security establishment in order to achieve greater unity of effort.

What changed?

Although the 2002 NSS implies the strategic environment is new, it is not.³ Nor is it the changed strategic environment that challenges the NSE. The NSE operates within three environments - the strategic, U.S. domestic, and the organizational. These environments changed and continued to change significantly. Yet, the NSE did not change to overcome the challenges. Understanding what changed in these environments and their implications is essential to understanding why roles and functions of IA members must be redefined and NSE processes redesigned.

These three environments are the key areas in which each IA member operates. Each area also defines the domain in which disparate forces (events and other actors) interact to influence IA member behavior. Analysis of these areas shows that changes occur more frequently and with greater tempo; it shows an increasing overlap between NSE agency interests; and demonstrates the NSE's organizational inability or unwillingness to adapt to the changing world.⁴

The strategic environment of 1947 was that of the bi-polar world and the resultant Cold War. For over forty years, U.S. national power focused on containing communism and maintaining a global balance of power with the Soviet Union. Within the U.S. government, there was large consensus in what the threat was; it provided a single point of focus external to the U.S. U.S. national interests were largely achieved through diplomatic lines of influence and military deterrence to include limited combat operations. The end of the Cold War marked little change in how the U.S. achieved its interests. What changed, however, was what those interests were.

Complex contingencies, caused largely by the emergence of rogue and failed nation-states, resulted in a significant increase in the tempo of U.S. (and multi-national military) interventions.⁵ The aim of the interventions was not to contain communism or deter potential nuclear powers. Rather, they were responses to events that threatened economic, political, or informational interests or threatened to erode global U.S. influence. All occurred within a rapidly changing global information environment and a more sensitive and responsive global economic environment.

The rate of diffusion and dissemination of information enabled by the Internet and communications satellites shrink the tyranny of distance and reduce economic, political, and informational event to reaction time lags. Tsunami relief in Indonesia in 2004 illustrates this. Immediately following the Tsunami, satellites enabled the media to bring the horrific destruction of the Tsunami to the homes of millions of viewers. World opinion rapidly judged contributions of the richer nations to be insufficient. Donor nations immediately reconsidered and increased their contributions until negative public opinion subsided. Today, we live in an information environment wherein world opinion, markets, political, and diplomatic pressures can influence significant national policy shifts in hours and days rather than weeks or months. Similar relationships exist between individual nations and the world economy.

The fact that the World's economies are globally linked is not new, but they are more sensitive to national and global events and the influence of international organizations (IOs) such as the European Union (EU), Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and

International Monetary Fund (IMF). IOs can now influence what were once considered internal domestic issues. In 1973 when OPEC embargoed oil, the U.S. imported thirty-five percent of its oil needs. Today, the U.S. imports fifty-six percent of its oil needs. OPEC's control of the oil represents significant influence over U.S. economic production. Other global markets became more sensitive to political, social, and other factors as well. In 2004 for example, the EU linked U.S. decisions regarding Global Positioning System satellites to U.S. domestic airline access to EU nations and EU airlines access to U.S. routes and airports.⁶ At a time when several airlines faced bankruptcy, challenges from more financially solvent EU airlines threatened to exacerbate U.S. airline financial difficulties.

As globalization increases, challenges to U.S. national interests will be more "networked" in nature. The linear solutions employed to solve them in the past will no longer suffice. The following hypothetical example demonstrates this. Reports on the Internet describe that Nigerian youth gangs blow-up an oil transfer facility in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria results almost instantaneously in an increase in the cost of a barrel of crude oil. Within hours, the cost of a gallon of gasoline increases nine cents in the U.S. and abroad. In order to retain profit margins against the increase in and volatility of oil prices, businesses seek cost reductions in more predictable areas such as labor. They invest in plants in less developed countries. The result is a net decrease in jobs in the U.S., higher global energy prices, and continued instability in the Delta Region that ultimately causes major international oil companies to threaten to cease operations in that country – not an insignificant event given that thirty percent of the world's oil demand is met by African oil exports. The African youth gangs attack the oil infrastructure because they view oil company actions and motives as exploitive.

Interconnected and interdependent global economies also weaken the U.S. defense posture. Today, there are significantly fewer U.S. defense contractors than existed during the height of the Cold War. As with many U.S. automobile manufacturers, they began to outsource to foreign subcontractors number of years ago. An estimated fifty-five percent of the U.S.'s defense stocks (computer microchips, explosives, and parts assemblies) are procured overseas.⁷ The result is that labor disputes, environmental issues, and health issues in a source country can have a negative impact on the U.S. economy and defense posture.

Thus, changes in the strategic environment place significant demands on the NSE. President Bush's NSS recognizes when he states, "Today the distinction between domestic and foreign affairs is diminishing. In a globalized world, events beyond America's borders have a greater impact inside them."⁸ This statement also alludes to the fact that the U.S. domestic environment changed as well.

One significant change within the domestic environment is the increase in Congressional oversight. This can be attributed to several factors such as greater access to information and greater public influence enabled by greater information technologies. *The 9/11 Commission Report*, a 500 page document, and the Select Committee's *Report on Hurricane Katrina* are examples of the public's greater ability to influence government and hold it accountable. In both cases, public outrage and concerns at what it perceived as governmental failure manifested itself into calls for formal investigations. In response to perceptions that the public demands it, Congress exercises broader roles, sometimes to the point of being invasive, in executing its responsibility to provide spending oversight.

The hearings regarding the Hurricane Katrina disaster, General Accounting Office (GAO) studies, and audits, reflect actions Congress takes to meet constitutional requirements to oversee spending. The GAO serves as Congress' independent investigation arm. In the last three years, it compiled studies on twenty-one cabinets and agencies regarding performance and accountability. Yet, IA coordination and cooperation are not included in its management objectives.⁹ That the GAO does not investigate the IA or its processes likely reflects that Congress does not perceive legal purview over IA processes or simply fails to recognize the expanded role of the IA.¹⁰ Several GAO reports identify requirements and shortcomings within IA cabinet members, but they do not address collective IA process shortcomings.¹¹ This leads to the conclusion Congress structured itself for oversight of the Cold War security establishment and focused largely on Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of State (DOS). It still remains largely structured and organized to focus on the military and foreign policy.

On a positive note, Congress does display an increase in claims to oversight responsibilities where cabinet responsibilities overlap. For example, the most recent Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2006 includes "riders" stipulating certain IA processes must exist before federal funds can be obligated.¹² As will be discussed, Congress arguably lacks the organization, expertise, and structure to effectively articulate such limitations on the NSE.

Another influence on the NSE from within the domestic environment is public opinion. The media allows most of the public to view events real time and empowers the public to expect a government reaction to those events.¹³ Resulting in a "react, observe, react" cycle, public opinion achieves greater relevance to U.S. policymaking and execution as indicated in the Hurricane Katrina Select Committee report. "(The) Select Committee agrees the media can and should help serve as the public's 'first informer' after disasters. In the 21st Century, Americans depend on timely and accurate reporting, especially during times of crisis."¹⁴

Lastly, the two environments, strategic and domestic, then combine to create another environment or realm that the NSE must take into account – the individual IA member's organizational environment. The organizational environment, largely defined by politics and each agency's culture (history, composition, doctrine), shapes and drives the often steady state or benign behavior of members of the NSE system.

Politics cause agencies to respond to those issues over which Congress has the greatest influence. With the exceptions of the DOD and DOS, these issues tend to be domestic in nature. The budget process, Congressional oversight, and public opinion drive the IA members to focus efforts within the U.S. rather than outside, and agency culture largely defines an agency's roles within the NSE. A recent interagency coordination study conducted by Rodrigo Serrano supports these observations.

That study indicates that agencies operate within their own comfort and survival zones and cultures.¹⁵ First, each agency seeks to preserve its autonomy and independence. This autonomy and independence enable organizations to retain freedom of action and remain more responsive. Other IA member proposed solutions are viewed as direct challenges to autonomy and authority. Second, organizational routines and procedures are difficult to synchronize and coordinate. In this instance, and if an organization views its role in an IA process as short-term, it is unlikely to expend organizational energies to change routines and procedures. Third, organizational goals differ among collaborating agencies. Clearly, in instances where secretaries fail to understand the NSS, a national policy, or other guidance or they physically lack the skills and capabilities to participate actively in the IA abroad, they will not be able to develop supporting strategies.

Agencies and sub-agencies/organizations bring different expectations and pressure to bear on each agency. There are several examples of this. The DOD is largely known as a planning organization while the DOS views that plans reduce flexibility. Within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) though a sub-agency of DHS, enjoys its own funding stream (and Congressional oversight that comes with it).

Organizational priorities and personnel turmoil also introduce obstacles that impede achieving NSE unity of effort through cooperation, coordination, and interdependencies. The IA is subjected to a number of influences by lobbyists, Congress, the Executive Branch, and those derived by IA leaders themselves. Each new administration introduces personnel turmoil. With each new presidential administration, an estimated 3000 personnel, senior and mid-level political appointees, change within government.¹⁶ Some departments and agencies are more

susceptible to this turbulence. For example, approximately thirty-six percent of DOS ambassadors are political appointees. At times that number can reach forty-six percent.¹⁷ Some observe there is a growing trend of erosion in quality of performance of government and leads to the judgment that “Policy makers attempting to oversee governmental systems and functions often find themselves lost in the thicket of rules and give up trying to exercise direction over these critical functions, leaving the field to political fringes and interest groups.”¹⁸

The implications of today’s environments are far reaching for the NSE. As the World’s geo-political system, political-economic system, and U.S. domestic and IA organizations continue to evolve and become more networked, so too must the NSE’s approach to operating within and against them. Whereas it operated within a system of a few rather linear relationships previously, it must now be capable of managing a number of diplomatic, security, intelligence, political, developmental, trade, law enforcement, homeland security, global health, global environmental, science and technology, international, national, regional, private, public, and ad-hoc factors.¹⁹ Analysis of recent U.S. government performance in complex contingencies or disasters illustrates this. In its most simple sense, this means creating conditions to cause NSE members to understand and accept new “stakeholder” positions in the NSE and understanding the inter-connectivity between disparate actors and events and how their agency’s actions will influence the system. Current practices and organization will not achieve this. Understanding why the NSE performs as it does is essential to addressing its shortcomings.

The National Security Establishment Today

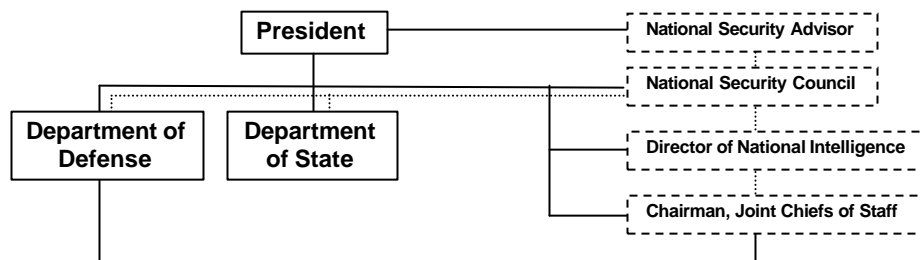


FIGURE 1, NATIONAL SECURITY ESTABLISHMENT

Figure 1 represents the current NSE.²⁰ By design and its nature, it is hierarchical and the structure is essentially identical to the NSE that was created in 1947. That the

structure remains the same indicates that its processes, procedures, and sub-organizations remained relatively static over the last fifty years despite changes in the environments. It is not surprising then to learn that the NSE, effective in some cases, also has significant shortcomings. These shortcomings manifest themselves in an ineffective IA. Closer analysis shows ineffective leadership, structural deficiencies, and inadequate resourcing contribute to these shortcomings.

Today's environments challenge all leaders within the NSE. At the highest level, the NSC, leaders must be able to integrate multiple factors from multi-tiered internally complex organizations and develop effective policy. At the lower levels, leaders must be able to execute policy, which is typically developed without integrated input, against a counter-balance of multiple political actors both within and outside the U.S.²¹ The task, at times, is too complicated or too large to accomplish and introduces strategic risk(s). At other times, and as the examples that follow will show, when NSE guidance lacks clarity, priorities are vague, or policy is improperly resourced, its execution lacks unity of effort. This was a key finding by the Select Committee investigating the Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina.²²

With regard to culture and doctrine, part of the NSE's problems likely stem from its history. Immediately following WWII, the U.S. military served as the single point of effort and responsibility for the occupation and rebuilding efforts of both Germany and Japan. Department of State was essentially relegated to a sideline role.²³ The Korean and Vietnam Wars represented new challenges for Department of State and other supporting IA members. In these cases, both complex contingencies, the U.S. military was subordinate to other government agencies yet held key roles in achieving strategic interests and achieved significant power within the NSE and is a common shortcoming in other complex contingencies. The sources are apparent.

Unfortunately, the outcomes of both cause many to question the ways and means the U.S. government employed to achieve them. Even today, scholars and key leaders such as Former Defense Secretary McNamara can not agree on the outcome of the Vietnam War much less agree on the causes of strategic success or failure. It is easy then to understand an organization's reluctance to attempt to improve or as a minimum inform processes from studying these events. It is also easy to understand why an IA member would not have the culture to recognize its logical integration and active participation in IA practices is essential today.

Other defining events, some short of war, occurred that shaped the interaction and functions of the NSE. Some were events that directly sought to achieve changes in IA

members. The Goldwater-Nichols National Defense Act (GNA) is the most notable. Other events resulted in attempts to achieve reforms in the defense establishment and influence the NSE such as the end of the Cold War. Others still are either very recent or ongoing, and the effects of these events have not manifested. The events are reconstruction and stability efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. national response to Hurricane Katrina, and most recently the failed attempt by the Bush Administration to allow a Dubai-based company to manage six seaport operations within the U.S. Not all of these events shaped the NSE in a negative manner, and they help to reinforce the understanding of the complexity of challenges to U.S. national security.

Many authors frequently hail the GNA as a success and advocate a GNA-like solution to achieve IA coordination.²⁴ The GNA strengthened civil leadership roles and more clearly defined the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), but many changes within the defense establishment that critics attribute to GNA, were not brought about by GNA. Rather, they should be viewed as evolutionary changes, not legislative ones. For example, joint interdependent acquisition occurred as a function of the exigencies of shrinking service budgets and not GNA legislation. It is also important to note that GNA focused on changes in like cultures. Fiscal constraints and evolutionary changes in adopting “best practices” resulted in the current interdependencies and inter-service relationships enjoyed by the DOD.²⁵

Importantly, GNA lessons indicate that attempting to legislate an effective IA will be too slow and therefore unacceptable. GNA-like legislation would have to focus on different organizations rather than just one and would likely attempt to create interdependencies where they do not exist and could result in greater organizational dysfunction.²⁶ And given the nature of the domestic and organizational environments, this would be difficult.

Not all of the changes attributed to GNA are undesirable. It is clear that the current structure of Congress (committees and sub-committees) to enable oversight of the DOD and DOS fulfills constitutional requirements. This strengthens the role of the legislature as a check and balance to executive power. GNA also forced the DOD to develop its own supporting military strategy for the NSS. Although viewed initially as more of a burden than a tool, the process provides a framework upon which long term programmatic and funding evolve. Years after enactment of the GNA, the DOD enjoys significant attention and support from Congress and importantly an elevated status within the NSE. Only three other cabinets, DOS, Department of Justice (DOJ), and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have supporting NSS strategies. The lack of supporting agency strategies represents a missed opportunity for the NSE.

The end of the Cold War can also be attributed to the current dysfunction within the NSE. Perhaps myopically, the near sudden demise of the Soviet Union resulted in a clear lack of defined, integrated roles for our elements of national power. As a result, one could argue that the U.S. retained a predominantly “hard power” approach to national security challenges. The result is that soft power was marginalized by the improper use of national power.²⁷ When subsequently confronted with the potential for numerous small scale conflicts the U.S. was not prepared and therefore not willing to attempt to shape (and ultimately prevent) potential conflicts. Almost two decades after the Cold War ended, the DOD ascended as a monolith within the NSE.

Other factors contribute to the apparent IA dysfunction within the NSE.

U.S. participation in complex contingencies in Afghanistan and Iraq and Hurricane Katrina present the most recent examples, both good and bad, of how the NSE prepares for and responds to security threats. In Afghanistan and Iraq, IA efforts fall short of expectations and do not reflect the level of effort, resourcing, and unity of effort achieved in the Federal response to Hurricane Katrina as demonstrated by the IA.

IA participation in Afghanistan is described and commonly viewed as very effective. But it is important to recognize that IA effectiveness is a result of ad-hoc organizations and coordination and not Executive guidance. U.S. government IA members work effectively together to achieve mutually agreed upon objectives and there is an understanding that to achieve these objectives, the IA must accept interdependent relationships. For example, the Drug Enforcement Agency accepts intelligence from military and other government agencies. DOS provides membership to Provincial Reconstruction Teams.²⁸ Anecdotal evidence indicates that the IA members who actively participate in coordinated and integrated IA efforts in Afghanistan view and appreciate the relationship between the U.S. domestic drug problem and opium production in Afghanistan, as well as the importance of relevant participation in international efforts to reduce drug production and smuggling. IA members are stakeholders. It is also clear that the IA cooperation emerged in an ad hoc fashion. There was no national-level guidance to the IA with regard to drug smuggling in Afghanistan. IA cooperation and coordination in Iraq enjoys much less success despite recognition of what is required and Executive guidance directing that it occur.

In May 2004, President Bush published National Security Policy Directive 36.²⁹ Likely recognition of a need to achieve more coordinated IA efforts in Iraq, it directs the DOS to serve as the lead agency in Iraq for all reconstruction and security efforts and that all other agencies will support as requested. President Bush’s cabinet’s response to his directive astonishes.

Charged with taking the lead in reconstruction and stability operations in Iraq in May 2004, Secretary Rice announced policy guidance and revisions nineteen months later. Budget submissions and Congressional testimony for the 2006 budget by Cabinet secretaries who, it would seem, have a stake in reconstruction efforts in Iraq, with the exception of the DOD and DOS, fail to mention any resource requirements for or list support to DOS reconstruction efforts in Iraq.³⁰

IA participation in efforts to achieve Iraqi rule of law further illustrates IA performance in Iraq. DOJ sent an expert who, while assigned to Iraq for a period of six months, was present in the country for approximately six weeks. He served as the expert on prisons and the penal system, a significant component to helping Iraqis to achieve rule of law. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) also sent an airport security expert from the Transportation Security Agency (TSA). His presence and effectiveness was ineffective as well. The American Embassy Baghdad Regional Security Officer (RSO) and Multi-National Force – Iraq staff developed and implemented Baghdad International Airport security policy.³¹

In practice, when IA members failed to fill critical positions, the Secretary of Defense resourced the manpower. This was the case with several key DOS positions within the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office (IRMO).³² The practice of filling voids accomplishes three important things for the DOD. It fills critical positions; it allows the DOD to retain autonomy and influence in reconstruction efforts, and it places like-minded DOD personnel inside a DOS organization. Thus, DOD's gain was the rest of the IA's and really the NSE's loss. The DOD's willingness to fill and resource IA positions serves as a disincentive for other IA member participation. Lack of participation means no responsibility or accountability for failure and does not require the organizations to change to meet requirements.³³

By contrast, the U.S. National Response Plan (NRP), formerly the Federal Response plan, serves as a standing unifying and tasking document for federal agencies and departments in response to disasters in the U.S. The Select Committee that investigated the government response to Hurricane Katrina indicates that the IA was adequately prepared to respond to relief efforts. The most common failing, it concludes, is a lack of leadership, guidance, and poor decisionmaking - reinforcing Serrano's finding regarding IA coordination and cooperation.³⁴

The NSE's failure to adequately assess the domestic and international impact of a Dubai company assuming responsibilities for managing port operations at six U.S. seaports caused significant political and public outcry that eroded public opinion and confidence in the Bush Administration. Whether that outcry was founded or not is moot. What is important is that the NSE, were it functioning effectively and had the IA identified potential issues related to the sale

of the British firm to the Dubai company, could have addressed public concerns in a proactive rather than reactive manner. Clearly the issue touched international banking and the Department of Commerce, the DHS, DOS, and constituents of every member of Congress. Those IA members have relationships with their traditional Congressional oversight bodies. This act of omission likely caused the bi-partisan political furor and debate that ensued and arguably eroded U.S. public confidence.³⁵

One common thread of failure in complex contingency and disaster responses such as Afghanistan and Iraq and Hurricane Katrina is the lack of an effective and well executed communications strategy. A recent GAO report cites four U.S. national-level initiatives for which there is no single public diplomacy strategic communications strategy.³⁶ This failure belies a lack of focus, understanding, and goals within the NSE. This ultimately results in an inability of members of the executive branch to convey common shared ideas and concepts to the Congress and gain its support. Analysis of Executive guidance and policies reinforces the GAO's findings.

Executive Guidance, Policy, and Practice

In the summer of 2001, the President published his initial *President's Management Agenda*. Its goal is to achieve efficiencies in government. The agenda was expanded from fourteen program initiatives to twenty-one; yet today, does not include any references to achieving greater IA coordination capabilities.³⁷ Along similar lines, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), part of the Executive Branch, provides training to senior level managers and leaders in government. None of the training courses offered by OPM address national security strategy or IA coordination processes despite the fact that the OPM mission statement includes references otherwise.³⁸ The OPM also hosts a web page listing rotation opportunities within the IA for senior Executive branch leaders. None of the jobs listed indicate opportunities in the IA critical organizations or locations such as FEMA, Iraq, or Afghanistan.³⁹

Another example of divergent guidance and unclear priorities is the recent international trips and conferences Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy Karen Hughes recently conducted. Secretary Hughes alone and not in coordination with the Secretary of Commerce held business round tables and worked closely with and traveled with more than sixty leaders of business and industry such as Pfizer, Xerox, PepsiCo, UPS, John Deere, and Citigroup to enlist corporate and private sector help in gaining influence abroad.⁴⁰

In a sense, Secretary Hughes achieved the beginnings of "IA" coordination and integration by developing a common vision and goal for disparate members of business – a

positive event. But clearly there were other stakeholders in the process such as the Department of Commerce, U.S. Information Agency, and U.S. Agency for International Development.⁴¹

Throughout the NSE, there are systemic managerial and organizational problems. Critical post-Cold War national security missions – counter-proliferation, counter-terrorism and homeland defense, computer network defense, information operations, bio-warfare defense, threat reduction and arms control, coalition warfare, peacekeeping and post-peacekeeping, civil reconstruction, and preventive defense are being accomplished in an *ad hoc* fashion by unwieldy combinations of departments and agencies designed half a century ago for a different world. Too many of these new missions are institutionally “homeless”: nowhere are clear authority, adequate resources, and appropriate accountability brought together in a clear managerial focus.⁴² And, absent effective leadership, agencies “adopt” the “homeless” missions if the prevailing influences in their operating environments indicate it is prudent to do so. Otherwise, IA members take the path of least resistance – they choose not to get involved.

Summary

Significant strategic environment changes should have shaped and influenced our NSE and its execution arm – the IA. But, it failed to effectively react to these changes because of a host of reasons. President Bush ascribes the problem to the legacy of the Cold War stating, “The major institutions of American national security were designed in a different era to meet different requirements. All of them must be transformed.”⁴³ He is only partly correct. Other sources are organizational such as cultures, some are asymmetric power distribution within the IA (DOD is dominant), and some are systemic and cross-cutting such as failing leadership and management practices. Hence and despite President Bush’s NSS, little progress has been made. IA members remain largely ambivalent and/or ignorant of their potential roles in the NSE. Until these faults are corrected, achieving unity of effort within the NSE is not feasible.

Reforming the NSE

Several proposals exist for correcting the broken IA. Remembering that solutions for reforming the NSE must address the networked nature of its NSE’s challenges, must achieve or reinforce stakeholders, must include policies that ensure unity of effort that are reinforced by practice, must mitigate or overcome Congressional impediments and IA cultures, and (importantly) must be achievable. Clearly, leadership and management practices and IA doctrine development, education, and training should be large components of the solution.

The more popular recommendations follow. Many reflect a lack of understanding of the interconnectivity of national security issues and goals and do not address unity of effort. Instead

many reflect organization centric approaches that are steeped in and hampered by cultures, incomplete leadership, and bureaucracies.⁴⁴

- Beyond Goldwater-Nichols (BGN). This study identifies symptoms of IA coordination problems not the problems themselves. Unfortunately, it then seeks to solve the symptoms by addressing the organization that least needs assistance in integrating the IA – the DOD. Other significant shortcomings are the expectation that Congress can create legislation that will create stakeholders and the approach is a DOD approach and is DOD-centric.
- Hart-Rudman Commission. In September 2001, the Hart-Rudman Commission on National Security published its first report. It rightly identified that decisions effecting national security are being made through acts of omission rather than commission. It further identified a need for a common discipline development of IA doctrine really to institutionalize IA processes. Hart-Rudman more completely recognizes and addresses the NSE as a system of systems than other proposals. Unfortunately, it fails to acknowledge that the strategic environment is a non-contiguous environment with two exceptions: when a crisis or disaster rises to the national level as was the case with Hurricane Katrina and at the President's level. Until that time, the President manages a loose confederation of systems all operating within their own environments and tending to be focused on first rather than second and third order effects of events relating to their responsibilities. As such, they respond to stimuli within their environments only. In other words, while it identifies the problem unity of effort, it does not address steps to achieve it.
- Joint Interagency Coordination Groups (JIACGs). Although this is a relatively new concept, its success thus far is limited. The DOD is the proponent for the JIACG. IA membership to it is limited. Few IA members are willing to assign quality personnel to JIACGs because the donor IA member sees little pay-off. This is likely because IA members do not perceive interdependencies. Additionally, the JIACG lacks directive authority. As a result, IA members in the JIACG serve as conduits of information or an additional layer of bureaucracy rather than empowered IA experts.
- Additional Coordinating Organization. Adding additional layers of coordinating organizations is inefficient and does little to develop stakeholders. Additionally, the Hurricane Katrina Select Committee identified that information passed through the maze of departmental

operations centers and ironically named “coordinating committees” lost timeliness and relevance as it was massaged and interpreted for internal audiences.⁴⁵

- Develop IA Culture and Doctrine. Developing the requisite IA skills would be an evolutionary approach that would include development of IA doctrine, training and education programs, and professional development strategies. This approach directly addresses organizational culture, training, and education shortcomings. An aging and retirement eligible civil service population opens an opportunity to implement this evolutionary approach.⁴⁶
- Interagency National Security Civil Service Corps. Many proposals recommend the establishment of an IA corps - selected members of the IA who are trained, educated, and utilized in IA processes to include planning and coordination. In theory, IA Corps members would be able to serve in a relevant manner within many of the departments and agencies and would possess a common shared understanding of the NSS ways, means, and ends. Absent Presidential guidance, the IA doctrine recommended by Hart-Rudman, and personnel management systems that value and reward such service, it is unlikely that IA leadership would effectively support the concept. This is a finding of the outcomes of NRP exercises and Hurricane Pam. Sending personnel to participate in what is perceived as someone else’s problem runs counter culture to other agencies, must be funded and valued (must be value added to the organization or the individual will suffer and the organization will not support it).⁴⁷
- I-A staffs with tasking authorities. Also known as the “lead agency” concept and largely the current practice within the FRP and in Iraq. As mentioned, the DOS only recently issued policy guidance regarding Executive guidance from May of 2004. Secretary Rice appropriately recognizes that the DOS lacks the depth and breadth of expertise and personnel policies to adequately address current challenges. Secretary Rice’s recent statement regarding Transformational Diplomacy – an attempt to pursue less hierarchical structures is encouraging, but it indicates a continuing misunderstanding or unwillingness to accept that the NSE must be expanded to include other members of the IA.
- Cabinet strategies. Cabinet strategies would serve many functions. They would aid in overcoming instability created when administrations change. They would provide common shared goals for members of each department or agency and would (presumably) be nested

with the overarching NSS. They would provide a tool against which to measure success. And, they would serve as an effective tool to garner the support of Congress. Executed in the same manner as with the DOD and DOS, the process could also serve to stem the asymmetric distribution of power within the NSE. Additionally, and in an analytical sense, cabinet strategies would help create and maintain a professional ethos of service to the higher organization (U.S. national security). This solution requires NSE leadership and policy.

- Status Quo. Choosing not to act is a course of action and essentially accepts the current practice of less effective, ad hoc solutions that accept national security efforts as they evolve or as acts of omission vice acts of commission. Ad hoc solutions to achieving effective IA coordination are typically borne of necessity and address new problems. Ad hoc solutions offer some advantages. They address the problem at hand, and they are not resourced until they are needed. Unfortunately, the status quo approach does not address the “homeless” issues that abound within the national security environment and can allow members to ascend, at times, to dysfunctional levels of (assumed) authority and power. They are also slow and inefficient. Their reactive nature diametrically opposes the need for the NSE to be proactive and shape the environment. Additionally, the status quo approach requires active risk management.

Recommendation

Faced with ambiguity, unclear priorities, and given the three environments that comprise the national security environment and the lack of effective guidance from the Executive, it is clear why the IA responds as it does. The IA lacks unity of effort. Solutions exist to correct this shortcoming, but they require significant and disciplined efforts across the U.S. government. NSE leadership, primarily the NSC and the President, must be the impetus for change. To do this, the guidance must expand the understanding of the IA to accept that its members no longer view their roles outside of the U.S. as independent ventures/tasks. NSE parts seeking disparate endstates are no longer acceptable. As a minimum, they must be an act of commission and not omission. The steps the NSC needs to take are:

- Rename the NSE. Call it the National Security System and treat it as the system of systems that it is.⁴⁸ Describing the NSS as such helps IA members to realize that they are stakeholders.

- Demonstrate effective leadership. Senior leaders must develop and issue consistent guidance and perform relevant management practices.
- Eliminate ad hoc IA efforts. Formulate a common shared vision of the endstate and develop a plan that will accomplish it. Demand effective, integrated IA coordination. In essence, the President determines clear concise national objectives and a plan to achieve them through the NSPD process and sticks to them.⁴⁹ This would also provide the basis for an effective strategic communications strategy.
- Risk Management. Achieving a structure that is 100% matched for the national security challenges posed today and in the future for our country is infeasible. In today's resource constrained environment and as with many organizations, IA members organize, structure, and resource for the likely challenges they face. (Much like insurance companies optimize premiums against the risks they face – likelihood of an event and costs, it is not feasible or acceptable to expect IA members to retool completely and at the detriment of their most likely responsibilities – U.S. domestic concerns in order to meet the rare requirements to support.)
- Develop, train, and educate IA doctrine. This includes implementation of planning tools and systems within the NSE. Take advantage of the impending retirement of approximately seventy percent of the federal civil servants by educating and training their replacements to understand the value of effective IA coordination and execution.⁵⁰
- Gain Congressional support. The Congress must play a significant role in supporting the evolution of the NSE. Not from legislating IA processes, but from passing legislation that allows greater IA interdependence in regards to funding and spending authorities. This includes resourcing enough personnel to participate in IA education and training programs.

Conclusion

IA coordination and cooperation are the armor and weaponry of 21st Century national security. The USG will not achieve an effective IA until the NSE leadership assumes a leadership role in developing a responsive, adaptive IA structure, IA processes, IA resourcing, and IA discipline (culture). Until then, the nation accepts significant risks. As with any learning organization, recognition of these facts, the shortcomings of the organization, provides the base

of departure to developing an understanding of the problem, reaching consensus on potential solutions, and taking steps to achieve them.

President Eisenhower stated, "The correct national security system will not guarantee success, but the wrong system guarantees failure. A defective system will suck the leadership into its cracks and fissures, wasting their time as they seek to manage dysfunction rather than making critical decisions."⁵¹ The NSE of the 21st Century largely resembles the national security establishment President Eisenhower sought to avoid, and it jeopardizes national security. To correct it, the NSC must assume a leadership role in developing a responsive, adaptive NSE structure, planning and execution processes, resources, and support of the public and Congress. Even then it will not achieve a completely effective capability. In these instances, the NSC must accept and mitigate risks to national security through acts of commission and not omission. Until then, the U.S. Government's interagency will remain adrift in capricious waters.

Endnotes

¹ The bibliography attached to this paper contains numerous essays, studies, and reports that address the IA process. Many advocate specific solutions to aspects of the problem; others are more general in nature.

² For the purposes of this paper, the NSE consists of the President, the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and National Security Council. Informal members are the National Security Advisor, and the DNI. "IA" represents agencies and departments within the executive branch of the U.S. government.

³ George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, September 2002.), 13.

⁴ Ashton B. Carter and John P. White, eds, *Keeping the Edge: Managing Defense for the Future* (The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 200), 2.

⁵ Since 1990, U.S. military forces participated in the first Gulf War, Humanitarian Assistance operations in Rwanda, Somalia, peacekeeping operations in the Balkans, Operations Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq or about one major complex contingency every two years.-

⁶ In 2003, the author attended a meeting in Germany wherein the U.S. Chief of Mission to the EU explained the relationship between an impending U.S. policy decision and the EU Trade Minister's intent to hold U.S. airline access to EU airports as leverage to a favorable outcome of the U.S.'s policy.

⁷ Murray Weidenbaum, The Economics of Defense Spending, *Foreign Policy Research Institute* Online, (14 February 2006) [journal on-line]. Available from <http://www.fpri.com>; Internet; accessed on 14 February 2006.

⁸ Bush, 31.

⁹ For a general overview of the GAO's focus, go to the GAO's "GAO studies" link at: <http://www.gao.gov/pas/2005>; Internet, accessed 6 February 2006.

¹⁰ Congress exercises purview over like governmental functions such as acquisition and physical security but not broad IA efforts. For a general overview of its focus, explore the contents of the Senate's committee and subcommittee structures. See "Committee Jurisdiction, United States Senate Committee on Armed Services," available from : <http://armed-services.senate.gov/about.htm>; Internet; accessed 12 February 2006 and "Committee Jurisdiction, United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs," available from <http://hsgac.senate.gov/index.cfm?Fuseaction=About.Jurisdiction>; Internet; accessed 12 February 2006.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² For an example of stipulations and conditions associated with appropriations, see *H.R. 2528: Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2006*, linked from *GovTrack.us* at "H.R. 2528," available from <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=h109-2528>; Internet; accessed 12 February 2006.

¹³ David J. Rothkopf, *Running the World* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books Group, 2005), 459.

¹⁴ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina, *A Failure of Initiative*, (Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 2006), 360.

¹⁵ Rodrigo Serrano, *What Makes Inter-Agency Coordination Work? Insights from the Literature and Two Case Studies*, (Inter-American Development Bank Sustainable Development Department, August 2003), 10-11; linked from Inter-American Development Bank Sustainable Development Department at "Social Development Division," available from <http://www.iadb.org/sds/doc/SOC%2DInteragencyCoordination%2De.pdf>; accessed on 19 April 2006.

¹⁶ David M. Cohen, *Amateur Government: When Political Appointees Manage the Federal Bureaucracy*, (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute, 1996), 6.

¹⁷ Ibid, 7.

¹⁸ Carter, 3.

¹⁹ Rothkopf, 457.

²⁰ For background, see Sam C. Sarkesian, John A. Williams, and Stephan J. Cimbala, *U.S. National Security: Policymakers, Processes, and Politics*. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 93. It is important to recognize that the figure is not an attempt to prescribe how presidents have or have not used their NSCs. Equally important is recognition that within the NSC, policies and structure have changed; at times DOS played a key role in decision and policy making and others the DOD. In all cases, other members of the IA were relegated to insignificant roles.

²¹ Sarkesian, 106.

²² Select Committee on Katrina, 361.

²³ The initial occupation of Germany remained a War Department-centric effort until then Secretary of State George C. Marshall proposed and implemented the *Marshall Plan*.

²⁴ For background see Clark A. Murdock, et al, *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era*, (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 2004).

²⁵ See Murdock, *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols*, 16. Beyond Goldwater-Nichols analysis fails to acknowledge that defense budget cuts – a function of the “swords to plowshares” era that followed the Cold War, forced greater joint acquisition processes.

²⁶ John P. Kotter, Leading *Change*, (Harvard, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 90.

²⁷ Rob De Wijk, “European Military Reform for a Global Partnership,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2003-04, 202.

²⁸ COL Michael Chesney, U.S. Army e-mail message to author, January 2006. Mike Chesney was a staff director in Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan, the senior military headquarters in Afghanistan.

²⁹ George W. Bush, “National Security Policy Directive 36” linked from *Federation of American Scientists* Home Page at “National Security Policy Directives: George W. Bush,” available from <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd051104.pdf>; Internet; accessed 20 April 2006.

³⁰ A review of Congressional testimony by cabinet secretaries reveals this. For example see Alberto R. Gonzales, “Prepared Statement of Attorney General of The United States Before The United States Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee Commerce, Justice, Science And Related agencies,” May 24, 2005, linked from *The Department of Justice* Home Page from <http://www.usdoj.gov/ag/testimony/2005/052405committeeonappropriations.htm>; Internet; accessed 19 April 2006.

³¹ The author was present for numerous briefings within the Mult-National Force – Iraq Headquarters wherein this was discussed.

³² National Security Policy Directive (NSPD) 41 specifically directs DOS to establish IRMO.

³³ With the exception of DOS Foreign Service Officers, the DOD is the only agency or department that can designate certain personnel as mission essential and direct their deployment overseas in support of contingencies.

³⁴ See Select Committee on Katrina, 359. The report states, “The Select Committee believes too many leaders failed to lead.”

³⁵ On 6 March, CNN quoted Senator Richard Shelby as saying that the Secretary of Treasury did not know about the Dubai deal nor did the Senate Banking Committee.

³⁶ United States Government General Accounting Office, *U.S. Public Diplomacy – Interagency Coordination Efforts Hampered by a Lack of a National Communication Strategy*, (Washington, D.D: U.S. General Accounting Office, April 2005), 28.

³⁷ The President's Management Agenda consists of 22 areas wherein he seeks to make government management more efficient. None of the 22 areas that he assesses quarterly and briefs to Congress annually includes IA coordination. See "The President's Management Agenda," linked from *The White House* Home Page at "The President's Management Agenda," available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/orders/>; accessed 13 February 2006.

³⁸ Office of Personnel Management, "OPM Goals," nd linked from *The Office of Personnel Management* Home Page at "OPM Goals," available from <http://www.opm.gov/html/goals.asp>; Internet; accessed 20 February 2006. See also "OPM Congressional Budget Justification and Annual Performance Plan" at <http://www.gpra/opmgpra/par32006/report.asp>.

³⁹ Office of Personnel Management, "List of Rotational Assignments," nd linked from *The Office of Personnel Management* Home Page at "OPM Goals," available from <http://www.pmi.opm.gov/rotaop.asp>; Internet; accessed 20 February 2006.

⁴⁰ Neil King Jr., "Trying to Turn Its Image Around, U.S. Puts Top CEOs Out Front," *Wall Street Journal*, 17 February 2006, p.1; and GAO United States Government General Accounting Office, *U.S. Public Diplomacy – Interagency Coordination Efforts*, 29. The approach ran counter to the 2004 GAO study that recommends an IA approach be taken.

⁴¹ King, 1.

⁴² Rothkopf, 457.

⁴³ Bush, 29.

⁴⁴ For background on "my position" approaches see John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Harvard, MA, Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 145-152. Kotter identifies that effective organizations achieve change more effectively with shared visions. IA member centric approaches will likely induce greater friction.

⁴⁵ Select Committee on Katrina, 361.

⁴⁶ "National Security and Defense" linked from Home Page at "*National Center for Policy Analysis Idea House*" available from <http://www.ncpa.org/pi/congress/pd032901f.html>; Internet; accessed 20 February 2006.

⁴⁷ Select Committee on Katrina, 359.

⁴⁸ Currently, 40 U.S.C. Section 1452, *Information Technology Management Reform Act of 1996*, defines the National Security System as any telecommunications or information system operated by the United States Government, the function, operation, or use of which: (a) involves intelligence activities; (b) involves cryptologic activities related to national security; (c) involves command and control of military forces; (d) involves equipment that is an integral part of a weapon or weapon system; or (e) is critical to the direct fulfillment of military or intelligence missions and does not include a system that is to be used for routine administrative and

business applications (including payroll, finance, logistics, and personnel management applications. See ATIS, "National Security System" linked from ATIS Home page at "Documents – Telecom Glossary" available from <http://www.atis.org/0010/index.asp>; Internet; accessed 20 February 2006.

⁴⁹ James Jay Carafano and Dana R. Dillon, "*Winning the Peace: Principles for Post-Conflict Operations*," *The Heritage Foundation*, No 1859, June 13, 2005; available from <http://www.heritage.org/research/nationalsecurity/bg1859.cfm>; Internet; accessed 21 January 2006, 6.

⁵⁰ "Skilled Personnel Exiting National Security Establishment" linked from Home Page at "National Center for Policy Analysis" available from <http://www.ncpa.org/pi/congress/pd032901f.html>; Internet; accessed on 20 February 2006.

⁵¹ Carter, 4.

